SNAPSHOT
Quality Assurance For Health

Health providers are independently sharing quality assurance practices with colleagues

Photo: USAID/HSSP

Mir Ahmad, guard in Worsaj Comprehensive Health Center, now uses personal protection equipment after the QA process was introduced in the health facility.

The investment that USAID has made in the quality assurance process is extending beyond USAID-supported health facilities and provinces and is amassing a large group of professionals who are empowered and motivated to improve the quality of primary healthcare services.

Across Afghanistan, many health professionals like Dr. Sayed Zia Ul Rahman, a health officer in Worsaj District, talk about the positive results in the achievement of standardized, high-quality healthcare and share their experiences with colleagues. Since 2006, USAID has partnered with the Ministry of Public Health and non-governmental organizations to implement the Quality Assurance (QA) process, a practical and streamlined management approach for improving the performance and quality of health services. The World Health Organization defines the quality of healthcare as the "proper performance (according to standards) of interventions that are known to be safe, that are affordable by the society, and that have the ability to produce a positive impact on mortality, morbidity, disability, and malnutrition."

Dr. Sayed was so moved by the positive changes that the QA process had brought to the Worsaj Comprehensive Health Center in Takhar Province, he shared his experiences with nearby colleagues. It didn't take long for the Tarusht Basic Health Center to act on what Dr. Sayed told them and start implementing QA in their facility. They were further encouraged by the positive feedback they received from the community in this area, and the team has continued implementing the QA process to make other performance improvements.

"After QA was introduced, I found it very useful for clients and health providers. I wanted to share my knowledge with others, so I started implementing infection prevention with the staff of Tarusht Basic Health Center. By teaching others about QA, I felt more empowered as a supervisor," said Dr. Sayed.

The process has several mechanisms that provide formal opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchanging ideas, such as the selection of model health facilities. The exchange between Worsaj Comprehensive Health Center and Tarusht Basic Health Center illustrates how health providers are independently sharing experiences of QA implementation with colleagues beyond formal opportunities. Health professionals are eager to adopt the tools and methods they need to make decisions, solve problems, and innovate locally. Health facilities managed by different non-governmental organizations and funded by different donors readily share experiences among themselves in order to improve the quality of their work.